

Governor Markell Announces 2013 Team Excellence Awards

DOVER – Governor Jack Markell announced today that the 20-member Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Brandywine Zoo Staff Team is the 2013 recipient of the Governor's Team Excellence Award. This annual award encourages teamwork by recognizing groups of state employees for their efforts to use continuous quality improvement tools to excel in leadership, team dynamics and communication, producing superior customer service and tangible results. This year, seven teams, representing the efforts of 122 state employees, were nominated for the award.

The Brandywine Zoo Staff Team consists of staff from the zoo's Animal Care and Education sections as well as Visitor Services staff employed by the Delaware Zoological Society. This group demonstrated their excellence as a team in responding to a series of emergencies at the zoo in the summer of 2013. These emergencies included storms that toppled trees onto their animal diet commissary and Monkey House buildings and a fire in their animal hospital. As a result of the team's emergency planning and preparation, quick response, and dedicated hard work, they were able to minimize the damage and maintain the safety of the staff and animals. Throughout all three events, the zoo was closed for only one day, customer service impacts were minimal, animal and education programs continued, and animal care was maintained at its usually high standards. In addition, their efforts to keep the public apprised about what was going on led to an outpouring of support from the community and helped increase attendance and fundraising.

"The Brandywine Zoo staff and all of the other nominees for the Team Excellence Award truly exemplify what it means to be a public servant," said Governor Markell. "Their accomplishments highlight the importance of working together

as a team with a commitment and dedication to provide excellent service to Delawareans.”

In addition to the award recipient, three other teams were recognized as finalists:

- Department of Finance/Delaware State Lottery KENO Launch Marketing Team

This team successfully implemented the new gaming product throughout the state in less than 10 months. The launch of this new product required the recruitment and education of over 70 new retailers, the introduction of the game to citizens and visitors of Delaware, and the adoption of best practices and innovative marketing strategies. Since the game’s launch, the team has placed 148 KENO terminals at 109 locations throughout New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties and realized approximately \$4.3 million in revenue.

- Department of Correction’s Central Offender Records Daily Release Unit Team

The Daily Release Unit is a new, specialized group within the Dept. of Correction’s Central Offender Records section, concentrating on the detainees that have posted bail or that the courts have released from custody. It is focused on ensuring that those detainees are released as quickly and as efficiently as possible. The Daily Release Unit Team implemented several process improvements that resulted in a drastically reduced turnaround time of court-ordered releases from 48 hours to within an hour and the release of offenders held at facilities to within a few hours. This more efficient release process has led to more housing space in their institutions and increased savings in the areas of food, medical, and staff overtime costs. It has also decreased the inquiries received about these detainees which allows the Central Offender Records staff more time to concentrate on the many other daily functions it performs. In addition, it has proven to be helpful in the department’s communications and collaboration with the Courts, Public Defenders Office, and

other outside agencies.

- DHSS/DLTCRP Background Check Center Development and Implementation Team

The Background Check Center Development and Implementation Team was comprised of employees from DHSS's Division of Long Term Care Residents Protection and the Division of Management Services. This team collaborated with Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services and nine other state agencies to develop dashboard software to add significant quality and efficiency to how the state conducts business. Some of the key agencies involved with this extensive project include the Department of State; Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families; Delaware Criminal Justice Information System; Delaware Health Information Network; Department of Safety and Homeland Security; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Office of the Inspector General; and Delaware State Police's Sex Offender Apprehension and Registration Unit. The team's innovative thinking helped create a background check system that allows multiple agencies to quickly access essential information without the delays of correspondence signatures, approvals via fax, phone calls, and written documents. This new, efficient system is considered the first of its kind in the nation.



Pictured are staff members of the Brandywine Zoo who participated on this team.